

REMARKS

The Office Action of December 20, 2002 rejected claims 2-6 and claims 22-37 under 35 U.S.C. s 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cheng (U.S. 6,014,256) in view of Konno et al. (JP 04335304). By this paper, claims 2-6 and claims 22-27 are canceled and new claims 38-56 are added.

One of the advantages afforded by the optical combiner/splitter of the present invention is that the optical path through some embodiments is all substantially parallel to a single optical axis of the optical combiner/splitter. This enables embodiments of the present invention to be packaged in a small, compact coaxial package. This results in a small package footprint and makes fiber management easier.

The rejections in the Office Action of December 20, 2002 are moot in view of the new claims submitted. The new set of claims presented herein are not presented in response to any particular rejection, but rather, to define the invention in a more particular way by more fully elaborating on the environment and nature of the problem solved by the invention.

As recited in claim 38, the optical path through the optical polarization beam splitter passes through a Wollast^{on}~~er~~ prism. In claim 38 the Wollast^{on}~~er~~ prism separates the light collimated by the first lens into a first beam component and a second beam component that are focused by a second lens into a second optical fiber and a third optical fiber respectively. New independent claims 46 and 52 similarly recite a Wollast^{on}~~er~~ prism.

In contrast Cheng explicitly teaches away from Wollast^{on}~~er~~ prisms. Cheng states that “[t]he Wollaston Rochon and Senarmont beam-splitters, which separates polarization components . . . produce beams which also exit at inconvenient angles, with one or both ^{that} ~~also~~ exit at inconvenient angles, with one or both

polarization components suffering from chromatism and distortion." See Cheng col. 1, lines 39-45.

In view of the foregoing, this application is believed to be in condition for allowance and favorable action is respectfully requested. In the event of any question, the Examiner is respectfully requested to initiate a telephone conversation with the undersigned.

Dated this 20th day of June 2003.

Respectfully submitted,



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So you don't mind
chromatism & distortion.
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Besides, deformability
is not the pertinent
threshold; chromatism is.